

# Ningchengopterus

***Ningchengopterus*** is a genus of pterodactyloid pterosaur from the Early Cretaceous (Aptian) Yixian Formation of China.

It is known from a juvenile specimen, holotype **CYGB-0035**, an almost complete articulated skeleton of a hatchling also showing soft parts, such as the flight membrane and pycnofibres, compressed on a plate and counterplate. It was in 2009 the smallest toothed pterosaur specimen even found in China. The type species *Ningchengopterus liuae* was in 2009 named and described by Lü Junchang. The genus name combines a reference to the Ningcheng district in Inner Mongolia with a Latinised Greek *pteron*, "wing". The specific name honours Ms Liu Jingyi who collected the fossil and donated it to science.<sup>[1]</sup>

*Ningchengopterus* was typified by the possession of about fifty teeth, twelve in each upper jaw and thirteen in each lower jaw. The teeth are curved, conical and pointed. The skull has a length of thirty-eight millimetres. The snout is elongated and tapering. The lower jaws show an incipient crest.<sup>[1]</sup>

The specimen could not be more precisely determined than Pterodactyloidea. It shared the relative proportions of the first and second phalanx of the flight finger with the Ctenochasmatidae, and especially *Eosipterus* found in the same formation, but showed no further synapomorphies of that group, so that Lü abstained from placing it in that clade.<sup>[1]</sup>

The teeth suggested that *Ningchengopterus* was a fish eater. The fully formed flight membrane was seen as confirmation of a hypothesis by Mark Unwin that pterosaurs displayed little parental care, their "babies" being able to fly shortly after hatching.<sup>[1]</sup>

## *Ningchengopterus*

**Temporal range:** Early Cretaceous,  
130–122 Ma

PreЄ Є O S D C P T J K PgN



## Scientific classification

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Order: †Pterosauria

Suborder: †Pterodactyloidea

Genus: †*Ningchengopterus*

## Type species

†***Ningchengopterus liuae***

Lü, 2009

## See also

- List of pterosaur genera
- Timeline of pterosaur research
- 2009 in paleontology
- Yixian Formation

## References

- Lü J. (2009). "A baby pterodactyloid pterosaur from the Yixian Formation of Ningcheng, Inner Mongolia, China". *Acta Geologica Sinica*. **83** (1): 1–8. doi:10.1111/j.1755-6724.2009.00001.x (https://doi.org/10.1111%2Fj.1755-6724.2009.00001.x).

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